## Characteristics of Head Start Teaching Teams: Associations with Classroom Quality and Child Outcomes

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### Project Description
The proposed study will examine associations among teaching team characteristics, classroom quality, and child outcomes within a large Head Start agency. This quantitative study will examine data from Head Start toddler and preschool teaching teams and classroom children. The study will use 2015-16 data collected by the Early Childhood Education Institute (ECEI). As part of the 2016 spring staff survey, teachers self-reported on the characteristics and perceived effectiveness of their classroom teaching team.

### Research Questions
1. What teamwork processes do teaching staff identify as factors in their success and challenges as a teaching team?
2. What level of perceived teamwork is reported by lead and assistant teachers in Head Start, and do these vary by teacher role?
3. How do teaching teams' structural characteristics associate with teamwork processes and level of perceived teamwork?
4. To what extent do teamwork processes and perceived teamwork associate with observed classroom quality?
5. To what extent do teamwork processes and perceived teamwork associate with children's cognitive and social emotional development? Is this association mediated by classroom quality?

### Sample
The participants in the study were lead and assistant teachers and children in CAP Tulsa Head Start classrooms in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The data will include 45 lead and assistant teacher pairs and approximately 148 children at 11 Head Start sites. Participants were a part of the larger ECEI/CAP Evaluation Project. The classrooms consisted of 13 toddler and 32 preschool rooms. The classrooms were full-day, full-year classrooms.

### Methods
Through secondary data analysis, the study will explore correlations among teaching team perceptions of teamwork, teacher characteristics, classroom quality, and child outcomes. The following methods will be used to analyze each question.

#### RQ1
- This question will be analyzed by creating a table that lists the types of successes and challenges described by the teachers on the 2016 survey.
- Themes will be created from the list of similar types of successes and challenges.

#### RQ2
- The question will be analyzed by examining the distribution and patterns of teachers' levels of perceived teamwork.
- Independent sample t-tests will be utilized to examine whether teachers' individual ratings of perceived teamwork differ by teacher role (i.e., lead teacher versus assistant teacher).

#### RQ3
- An ANOVA will examine the association with years working together.
- Chi Square and a cross tab will measure the association with ethnicity match.
- To examine differences within teachers' perceived levels of teamwork (continuous), individual teacher scores will be computed, and then the difference of the lead and assistant teachers' scores will be used as the team value of perceived teamwork.
- Bivariate correlations will be computed for associations with years working together as a team, and an independent sample t-test will be conducted to examine differences by ethnicity match.

## *RQ4*

- To account for the nested data and to provide corrected, unbiased parameter estimates, Multilevel Modeling techniques using MPLUS will be used.
- Full Information Maximum Likelihood methods will be utilized to account for missing data.
- A regression analysis will be used to estimate the relationship between classroom quality and the teaching team's reported teamwork processes as well as levels of perceived teamwork.

## *RQ5*

- This question will build on the models in question 4 by regressing child outcome variables (i.e., HTKS, Pencil Tap, and DECA modeled separately) on domains of classroom quality.
- To test for indirect effects, bootstrapping will be employed and confidence intervals for the indirect effects will be inspected to determine whether or not indirect effects are supported in these data.

## Progress Update

Data analysis is underway. The preliminary findings for the first research question conclude that the primary challenges for teaching staff are lack of planning together, different philosophies, and communication. The factors said to contribute to success of their teaching teams include communication, teamwork, and interpersonal relationships.

The presentation will highlight the remaining study findings.

## Implications for Policy/Practice

Program administrators can use the information listed as successes and challenges to:

- Monitor teams in an effort to improve the team's communication and aid the team's tenure
- Consider team's effectiveness when making staffing decisions at the beginning and throughout the school year.
- Provide insight on teaching team practices and perceptions of teamwork, which may influence the quality of the classrooms and potentially increase child outcomes.

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